

Why we need urban forestry code changes now:

1. Clarity: Many urban forestry-related provisions in the City Code are unclear, inconsistent, redundant, or incorrectly cross-referenced. These essential urban forestry functions have long been confusing and need urgent clarification:

- a. Tree removal permits (including criteria for Specimen Tree removal)
- b. Tree care responsibility and enforcement on public and private property
- c. Tree protection, replacement and bonding provisions in the Stormwater, Vegetation, and Zoning codes
- d. The requirement for vegetation management permits within Resource Protection Areas
- e. The UFC's role in reviewing development plans and addressing appeals of arborist's decisions

2. Canopy sustainability: Equally urgent are updated tree canopy requirements. The current standards are inadequate and ineffective for both commercial and residential development. This undermines sustainability of the whole urban forest. Changes for the UFC to consider are:

- a. New code requirement for minimum green space and tree canopy % on mixed-use and commercial properties (as opposed to guidelines)
- b. Addition of a tree canopy fund for mixed-use and commercial development, to accept payments of remaining bond values and payments in lieu of tree planting requirements that can't be met on a site (current code has only a residential tree canopy fund)
- c. Changing the threshold for requiring an approved Landscape Conservation Plan, to prevent piecemeal tree clearing on private property
- d. Clarification of when a property is "under development" to prevent clearing of development sites before plans are submitted
- e. Requiring a maintenance agreement to hold private commercial owners responsible for streetscape tree and planter maintenance
- f. Finally, the residential canopy cover code (requiring replacement of 20% canopy within 10 years) needs to be discussed with UFC and City Attorney. Falls Church may currently have more stringent canopy cover provisions than allowed under state law, and Kate, Charles and Kathy will explore how to address this.